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YPSILANTI

New grocery store headed downtown

Dos Hermanos to sell more than produce in Ypsilanti community

By Dan DuChene
Staff Writer

Two Hispanic brothers' search for good tortillas has led them to open two grocery stores, including a new location downtown.

The two brothers, or dos hermanos in Spanish, plan to open their grocery store, called Dos Hermanos Market, on Michigan Avenue, west of Abe's Coney Island. The building is near completion, with some exterior work and an inspection keeping the store from its grand opening.

Reyes, 30, and Nicolas, 37, Arreola, the store's owners, are originally from Michoacan, Mexico, located along the Pacific coast, south of Mexico City. The two moved to New Jersey in the 1990s to work on drywall. They continued the same line of work when they moved to Michigan in 2001. The two said they were frustrated when they couldn't find quality Hispanic groceries in the area.

"There wasn't any place to buy hot peppers," Nicolas said. "We were driving 45 minutes to get tortillas."

To meet the needs of others in the area, the two started delivering groceries to people out of their van in 2003. A year later, they opened their first grocery store, called Dos Hermanos Market, in Adrian. Now in 2007, the two are opening their second store in Ypsilanti.

"We know the town here. We're here to help the community"
Nicolas Arreola
Co-Owner of Dos Hermanos

The brothers drive to Chicago every week to pick up the produce they sell at their store. Aside from the standard fruits and vegetables, they said other Hispanic-oriented items will be for sale.

"They don't have the produce we have here," Reyes said of the larger competitors they face in both Ypsilanti and Adrian.

In addition to the varieties of produce, the two said they plan to operate a bakery, selling fresh donuts and Mexican bread, and a deli, serving fresh sandwiches and tostadas. However, they said they don't expect people to shop at their store for only food.

"Quality of service," Nicolas said. "It's the first thing we want to sell you."

The two brothers said Ypsilanti's urban environment and large Hispanic community attracted them to the area. They said they listen to a Hispanic radio station, 1480 AM, which broadcasts from Ypsilanti.

"We know the town," Nicolas said. "We're here to help the community."

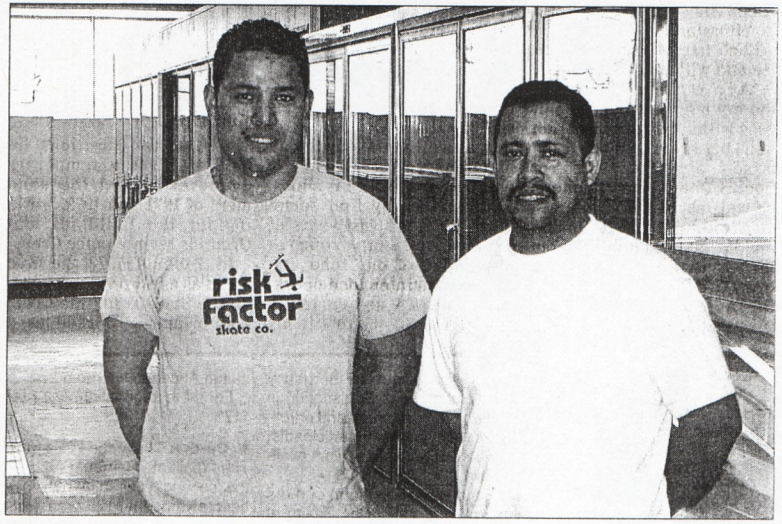

Photo by Dan DuChene
Reyes and Nicolas Arreola are brothers opening a new, Mexican-oriented grocery in downtown Ypsilanti.

In Adrian, the brothers are involved with several nonprofit organizations, donating money and supplies for fundraisers. They also host cultural celebrations, a Cinco de Mayo party, and a fiesta for Hispanic immigrants in July.

"It's more than a grocery store," said Nicki Asni, a coowner of Abe's, when comparing Dos Hermanos to the Asian Grocery, which had been in the location prior to the Arreola brothers.

Asni said he co-owns the entire strip where the restaurant is located, along Huron Street, across from EMU's College of Business.

He said the Asian Grocery moved out of its location in October last year, but he wasn't sorry to see it go.

"They served one kind of people only, and that's it," Asni said.

Reyes said the store will be open to everyone who wants to shop.

"We're Mexicans, but we're not going to sell to only Mexicans," he said.

The Ypsilanti Dos Hermanos Market is 3,200 square-feet; nearly double the size of the brothers' Adrian store. Though the sight is large, there is talk of more expansion once the store is established, perhaps spilling over to the now vacant laundry-mat located next store.

"Depends on how this works," Reyes said. "If everything goes the way we want it to, it won't stop here."